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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

S. Vietnam

CONFIDENTIAL (When Filled In) CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS NO FOREIGN DISSEM

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

REPORT NO. TDCS-3/547,672

SUBJECT PLANS FOR A COUP D'ETAT IN CENTRAL VIETNAM BY THE REFORMED VNQDD

DATE DISTR. 18 MAY 1963

PRECEDENCE ROUTINE

DATE OF INFO. EARLY MAY 1963

REFERENCES IN 41761

PLACE & DATE ACQ. VIETNAM, SAIGON (13 MAY 1963)

FIELD REPORT NO. FVS 8959

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE A VIETNAMESE NEWSPAPERMAN (C) WITH EXTENSIVE CONTACTS IN PRESS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES.

APPRAISAL: IT IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT THE VNQDD IS BEING REFORMED; ITS CAPABILITIES IN CENTRAL VIETNAM CANNOT BE JUDGED.

1. SHORTLY AFTER THE 8 MAY 1963 INCIDENT IN HUE, NGUYEN VAN LUC RECEIVED A PLAN FOR A COUP D'ETAT IN CENTRAL VIETNAM FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CENTRAL VIETNAM THOAT XAC PHONG TRAO (TXPT). (SOURCE COMMENT.. TXPT DOES NOT TRANSLATE MEANINGFULLY INTO ENGLISH. THOAT HAS THE CONNOTATION OF GOING OUT IN MIND AND SPIRIT; XAC MEANS BODY, I.E., PHYSICALLY; PHONG TRAO MEANS MOVEMENT THUS, THE MOVEMENT OF MIND, SPIRIT, AND BODY MIGHT BE ONE TRANSLATION; A BETTER ONE WOULD BE VNQDD.) THE TXPT HAS BEEN DEVELOPING SINCE 1958 FROM THE VIETNAM QUOC DAN DANG (VNQDD) VIETNAMESE NATIONALIST PARTY), PARTICULARLY THOSE ELEMENTS IN CENTRAL VIETNAM,

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GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

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THE VNQDD STRONGHOLD. THE TXPT, ALTHOUGH COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF FORMER VNQDD MEMBERS, WAS ESTABLISHED ESSENTIALLY AS A BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION AND HAS BEEN LEGALLY ENGAGED IN CIVIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES SINCE ITS FORMATION. CLANDESTINE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION HAS PROCEEDED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING NEW, YOUNGER LEADERS, AND OF DENYING THE OLDER PASSIVE TENETS OF BUDDHISM AS WELL AS THE OLDER LEADERS OF THE VNQDD, THE ULTIMATE INTENT BEING A REVITALIZED REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT. (FIELD COMMENT. LUC IS THE FATHER AND ACCOMPLICE OF NGUYEN VAN CU, ONE OF THE TWO PILOTS WHO BOMBED THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE ON 27 FEBRUARY 1962.)

2. THE TXPT CENTRAL COMMITTEE REMINDED LUC THAT THE ORGANIZATION WAS IN A POSITION TO HANDLE A COUP ACTION IN CENTRAL VIETNAM EFFECTIVELY, POINTING OUT THAT THOSE MILITARY UNITS NOT CONTROLLED COULD BE NEUTRALIZED AND THAT THE AIR BASE AT DA NANG COULD BE CONTROLLED THROUGH THE AIR FORCE. THE COMMITTEE STATED THAT, AFTER THE ANTI-BUDDHIST ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE PEOPLE WERE READY FOR AN UPRISING. BY TAKING NGO DINH CAN AND ARCHBISHOP NGO DINH THUC INTO CUSTODY AND BY GAINING MILITARY CONTROL OVER THUA THIEN AND QUANG NAM PROVINCES, SUCCESS COULD BE ASSURED IN CENTRAL VIETNAM. THIS WOULD PLACE THE TXPT IN A POSITION OF USING PRESIDENT DIEM'S TACTICS OF NEGOTIATIONS AGAINST HIM, I.E., HAVING GAINED CONTROL OVER CENTRAL VIIETNAM, THEY WOULD OFFER TO NEGOTIATE WITH DIEM

AND , AT THE SAME TIME, THEY WOULD BE MOUNTING A COUP AGAINST THE REGIME IN SAIGON, WHICH WOULD TAKE PLACE NO LATER THAN THREE DAYS AFTER THE ONE IN CENTRAL VIETNAM.

3. LUC SENT A TRUSTED FOLLOWER, ONE VIET , TO SAIGON TO DISCUSS THE PLAN WITH AN OPPOSITIONIST SYMPATHIZER AND GET HIS VIEWPOINT. VIET WAS ADVISED TO TELL LUC THAT ANY SUCH ACTION WAS PRECIPITATE AND DANGEROUS. ALTHOUGH IT WAS PROBABLY TRUE THAT THE FORMER VNQDD MEMBERS IN CENTRAL VIETNAM HAD THE POWER CLAIMED, A COUP THERE, WITHOUT SIMULTANEOUS ACTION IN SAIGON, WOULD LEAVE A VACUUM WHICH THE VIET CONG (VC) COULD IMMEDIATELY USE TO THEIR OWN ADVANTAGE. VC REACTION PROBABLY WOULD TAKE THE FORM OF GAINING CONTROL OF ALL AREAS NOT EFFECTIVELY CONTROLLED BY THE COUP GROUP, WITH THE ULTIMATE POSSIBILITY OF PARTITIONING CENTRAL VIETNAM, OF BEING IN A POSITION TO FORM A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT, AND FINALLY, OF BEING ABLE TO CALL FOR NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES. ACCORDING TO VIET, THIS FOLLOWED LUC'S THINKING, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE HIS FOLLOWERS WERE NOT IN A POSITION TO ACT IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY. VIET THOUGHT THAT LUC WOULD INSTRUCT THE TXPT CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN CENTRAL VIETNAM TO TAKE NO ACTION AT THIS TIME, AND THAT LUC'S ADVICE WOULD BE ACCEPTED.

4. FIELD DISSEM. STATE ARMY NAVY AIR USMACV USOM MAAG USIS CINCPAC PACFLT PACAF ARPAC 9TH FIELD STATION 2ND AIR DIVISION.

END OF MESSAGE